

Jessica Waylon
9442 Wascana Street
Regina, SK S4S 2H3
Ph: (306) 555-5555

Fiction: Mini-mystery
Approx. 1987 Words

FELINE FORTUNES

Huge clouds of blue-gray smoke billowed behind Walter Enderby's car as he swung widely onto the highway and stomped on the gas pedal trying to exert another ounce of power out of his crumbling shell of rust. His white hands clutched the brittle steering wheel.

A slight grimace-like smile appeared on his chubby face when he thought about the plan he'd devised to guarantee his inheritance. Then his problems would be solved and everyone would quit snickering behind his back. He could build up his business and that shiny new machine, which he had been eyeing at the car lot across from his office window every day, would soon be his. Most important, Nancy would be impressed.

He could already picture his lanky secretary snuggled up beside him with a pleased grin. Ever since Nancy had joined Walter's private firm a few months ago, it had been plain she was interested in extracurricular activities with the boss. Walter liked the way she really appreciated him. Sure, he led Nancy to believe he was loaded, but he would be one day. The problem was he also knew she wouldn't wait around for him long. He had to act quickly. Without the money, he would lose everything.

Suddenly, a cat darted across the road. Walter swerved to miss it. A horn blared sharply. Walter yanked the wheel and his car shimmied erratically back into the right lane. Damn cat! He hadn't seen the oncoming car. Cats seemed to be everywhere, tormenting him, the cause of all his problems.

Easing his foot off the gas pedal, Walter again the solution he'd devised. It was simple really and today he was going to put it into action. He must pull his thoughts together; his mother's house was just ahead. Be calm, act naturally, that's all he had to do. It would soon be over.

Walter gritted his teeth and snapped open the gate, narrowly missing the cat straight in his path. He swore under his breath as the animal yowled and streaked across the spacious yard. Then he glanced nervously at the upstairs bedroom window. Had his mother heard? Beads of sweat popped on his pudgy brow. He fumbled in the breast pocket of his vest for a handkerchief, taking several deep breaths. His fingers touched the small vial and he felt reassured.

His mother would be having her midday rest. Still, he didn't want anything to cause her to become excited and have another heart attack. Not quite yet anyway. The doctor had said the next one could be fatal and Walter wanted time to accomplish his mission. If his mother died first, he'd get nothing!

Bessie Enderby, a delicate, tiny woman rested frequently and took special tiny pills ever since her heart had begun weakening several months before. Walter religiously increased his visits to his mother every week, travelling the thirty miles from the city to her home on the outskirts of a small town.

As a dutiful son Walter sat through her prattling, pretending an intense interest in everything she had to say. Especially about her cats. They were her pride and joy, but the nightmare of Walter's unbearable visits.

They sensed his dislike and reacted with equal hostility to him, hissing when he shoved them off a seat so he could sit. When Bessie wasn't looking they dug their claws into the back of his calves from underneath the couch. If he protested, his mother admonished him for being silly, all the while beaming at her precious cats.

It wasn't that Walter hated cats exactly. It was these particular felines and the fact that she actually preferred those fur bags to him, her only child. And there was every indication she was going to leave all of her substantial life savings to these caterwauling strays.